

## N E W S R E L E A S E

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**Date:** October 4, 2007

**News Release No.:** 07-83

### **EDD celebrates the talents of workers with disabilities**

**SACRAMENTO** – According to a couple of different surveys, Californians with disabilities are only about half as likely to be employed compared to those without disabilities. As part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, the state Employment Development Department (EDD) has created a special Web site feature highlighting California's efforts to help open workplaces to people with disabilities.

The Web site also showcases the Silver Anniversary Media Access Awards program in Los Angeles, which takes place this year on October 14. Stevie Wonder will receive the Governor's Award of Excellence as entertainment industry leaders and the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities celebrate 25 years of progress for people with disabilities.

The EDD Web site [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov) offers a wide range of valuable information for both workers with disabilities and employers looking for good workers. It also profiles five EDD Disability Program Navigators – staff members working to break down barriers their disabled clients face in finding meaningful employment.

EDD Director Patrick Henning launched the Disability Employment Awareness Month observance by stressing the department's commitment to people with disabilities.

"The Employment Development Department values the talents that people with disabilities bring to the workplace," Henning said. "We are committed to their full participation in our workforce and in all workplaces throughout California.

"This year's national theme is 'Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team,'" said Henning. "At EDD we know first hand the talents that our employees with disabilities bring to our workforce and the important role they play in making EDD truly a winning team. An inclusive workforce enables EDD to serve California's richly diverse population more effectively."

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EDD partners with the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and disability advocates to greater reflect our diverse population in entertainment industry productions. Every year those in the industry who hire and/or accurately portray people with disabilities, and use the power of their medium to raise public awareness and acceptance of the talents and skills of people with disabilities, are honored with a Media Access Award during a gala event in Los Angeles. This year's special 25<sup>th</sup> Silver Anniversary celebration will be presented at the Universal Studios Globe Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday, October 14. Actors, entertainers, directors, producers, writers, casting agents, and pioneers of the media access mission are among those being recognized with special honors.

The Disability Program Navigators assist people with disabilities find employment and those profiled on the Web site work throughout the state: Alix Shore at the Sonoma County Job Link, Franklin Moore at the Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Investment Board, Jean Nelson at the San Diego Workforce Partnership, Lloyd Saposnek at the Orange County Career Center, and Lynette Pimentel of the NORTEC Smart Business Center in Redding.

To read their stories and to learn more about Disability Employment Awareness Month, go to the EDD Web site: [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov)

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